

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please substitute the enclosed formal sheets 1/5 to 5/5, inclusive, each labeled "Replacement Sheet", for the sheets presently in the case. The Replacement Sheets provide a reprise of the 11 Figures presently in the case.

No new matter is added.

REMARKS

Claims 24 and 28 – 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kruger (EP 992,659) in view of Santiago et al. (U.S. 4,155,980) or Abthoff et al. (U.S. 4,145,394).

Independent claim 30 has been amended to recite “ *A catalytic converter subassembly comprising: ... an exhaust manifold comprising a manifold wall **including a thickened section defining an outlet port**; ... **at least one recess formed in said wall substantially concentrically circumscribing said outlet port**; ... a catalytic converter shell, wherein an end portion of said ... shell is disposed within said ... **recess to effect a seal therebetween**; ... and ... a mat protection ring **disposed substantially concentrically within said shell and including opposed first and second ends wherein said first end ... is disposed in said ... recess ...**”.*

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the presently claimed structural configuration. Claims 24, 28 and 29 depend from independent claim 30, and are thus, distinguishable from the references for the same reasons.

Accordingly, in view of the amendments, it is requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kruger in view of Santiago et al. or Abthoff et al. as applied to claim 30 above and further in view of “3M Interam Mat Product Guide”.

Claims 25 and 26 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent claim 30, and are thus distinguishable from the art of record for the reasons set forth herein above.

Accordingly, it is requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kruger in view of Santiago et al. or Abthoff et al. as applied to claim 30 above and further in view of Smith et al. (U.S. 5,720,319).

Claims 27 depends from independent claim 30, and is thus distinguishable from the art of record for the reasons set forth herein above.

Accordingly, it is requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Applicants believe, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, that all grounds of rejection have been addressed and overcome, and that all claims are in condition for allowance.

If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication and/or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Gordon Lewis

Reg. No. 28735

(248) 813-1234